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THE MUSEUM IDEA

Within the last few years the development of the Museum idea in this country has been phenomenal. The number of Art Museums has been greatly increased and the scope of these institutions has been vastly widened. Curiously enough, though Art Museums are more common than they formerly were and the attitude of the Museums to the people has undergone remarkable change, the attitude of the people toward the Art Museums is to a large extent unaltered. We still hear them condemned as aristocrats among public institutions, mausoleums, curiosity shops, cold storage places and the like,

and again and again we are told that they are of little service to the people. It is true that the old idea of the Art Museum was that of a treasure house, and that, to an extent, it is still retained—the Museums acquiring rare and beautiful works beyond the reach of the average private citizen. But having acquired, the Museums to-day do not sit still and wait for the people to come and admire, they go out and invite them in, going even into the lowly places and by-ways of city life, and with what result? This—the attendance is being vastly increased and the little citizens and the so-called common people are beginning to look upon them as places of recreation in which they have a common right and interest. There is a widespread effort on the part of the Museums to reach the people and to render actual service. Evidence of this will be found in a brief account of the educational work of the Metropolitan Museum which is given on a subsequent page. In Boston, furthermore, during the summer the children of the tenements are brought to the Art Museums in crowds, and wooed and won by patient members of the Museum staff. Last winter in this Museum an exhibition of the arts of the foreign population of Boston was held to interest and attract the strangers who had come to a new land. In other Museums there are lectures, there are study classes, there are constantly changing exhibitions to appeal to and enliven interest. No longer can a Museum director be merely a specialist in art; he must be besides this an educator, a promotor, a social worker—one whose interest in the people is no less vital than his interest in art.

All this is encouraging and inspiring and is going to mean much to our nation in the future, but, like every forward movement, it is attended by the element of risk. In our effort to make art popular we may in our enthusiasm overstep the boundary and make it cheap; in our desire to make it serviceable we may forget that its chief function is to uplift. The Museum must stand to the

people as an authority; it must represent to the average mind a tangible demonstration of beauty, not necessarily structurally but relatedly, it must be a purveyor of good taste and an up-builder of ideals. Mankind craves beauty as a symbol of happiness and it is this that the Museums can conserve and make manifest. No change in the present Museum methods is necessary, but a wider grasp of the Museum idea on the part of the people would lead in an incredibly short space of time to greatly improved results—and, it is believed, to better citizenship.

NOTES

**A GREAT PRINT
DEPARTMENT
AND ITS NEW
HEAD**

Of wide significance and importance were the announcements made in the October number of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts' *Bulletin* that Mr. FitzRoy Carrington had been appointed head of the Museum's Department of Prints, that he had at the same time been recommended by the Fine Arts Department of Harvard University for appointment as lecturer in that Department, and that the *Print-Collector's Quarterly* would, while continuing under his editorship, be published hereafter by the Museum.

For some time past the friends of the Print Department of the Museum both in Boston and New York have, it seems, been considering means to develop its influence and to bring it into closer relation with the Fine Arts Department of Harvard University. Mr. Carrington is their solution.

On March 1st he will take charge of the Department of Prints with Mr. Emil Richter, who has been Curator for the past twelve years, as his associate—Mr. Richter desiring the freedom thus given him in order to devote himself more exclusively to study. The Print Department of the Museum of Fine Arts has now more than 60,000 prints, a collection which shows the history of the art from its beginning, and contains examples of the works of all the great masters. It is hoped, and believed, that

Mr. Carrington will be able to build up this collection to such an extent that it may ultimately rank with those of the great Museums of Europe. Receiving from the President and Fellows of Harvard University the appointment of Instructor of Fine Arts, he will prepare and deliver each year a course of lectures on etchings, engravings and kindred subjects. He and the members of his staff will, also, give informal talks at the Museum of Fine Arts to arouse the interest of the public and train the perceptions of the youthful print collector.

In addition to the active routine work of his department, Mr. Carrington proposes to co-operate with print collectors, and with other Museums throughout the country, especially the Fogg Art Museum at Cambridge, and to use his best endeavors to organize a National Society of Print Lovers in America.

Mr. Carrington has accepted the invitation extended to him, contingent on the necessary Endowment Fund of \$150,000 being subscribed or guaranteed. Two-thirds of this Endowment Fund was raised, however, by the middle of October and there is no doubt the full amount will be secured.

For fifteen years Mr. Carrington has been a partner of the firm of Messrs. Frederick Keppel & Co. He is well versed in his subject and has the enthusiasm coupled with knowledge which will enable him to carry on the work with ardor and success.

**EDUCATIONAL
WORK OF THE
METROPOLITAN
MUSEUM**

A recent number of the *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* was devoted chiefly to educational work, which is planned and carried on under the direction of Mr. H. W. Kent, the assistant secretary, who in 1907 was made Supervisor of Museum Instruction. There was a review of the work done in the museum in the way of bringing school children in touch with its collections through lectures and special tours. Extracts were also given from